

Upper Peninsula Beekeeping Conference – March 28, 2026

Speaker bios and session descriptions (ordered by presenter name)

Candace Rose Casados	
Candace Rose Casados is President of the Michigan Beekeepers Association. She is a dedicated beekeeper with 15 years of experience and a Master Beekeeping certification in progress. Her passion for honey bees began in childhood and has blossomed into a lifelong commitment to understanding and supporting these vital pollinators. As a holistic nutritionist, Candace specializes in incorporating the medicinal and nutritional resources created by honey bees into her practice. She deeply values the intricate connection between honey bees and humans, advocating for sustainable practices that benefit both. Through her work, Candace educates and inspires others to appreciate the essential role bees play in our ecosystem and the many ways their contributions enrich human health and well-being.	
Bees Through Time and Cultures	Keynote, 8:55am
From ancient cave paintings to modern science, honeybees have long captivated the human imagination. This presentation explores the enduring relationship between humans and honeybees across history and cultures — from their sacred symbolism in Egypt and Greece, to their role in Indigenous traditions, medieval medicine, and today’s environmental awareness. Together, we’ll trace how bees have inspired art, religion, language, and agriculture, revealing how this small yet mighty insect continues to shape our shared story.	
Holistic Self-Care from the Hive	Mixed Bag, 2:00pm
Honeybees are master alchemists of nature, transforming sunlight and blossoms into gifts that nourish, heal, and inspire. This presentation explores the many ways humans can mindfully and sustainably utilize the resources created by honeybees — from honey and propolis to beeswax, pollen, and royal jelly. We’ll examine their traditional and modern applications in wellness, skincare, nutrition, and natural medicine, while honoring the balance between human benefit and bee stewardship. Join us in discovering holistic ways to celebrate and sustain the harmony between bees, nature, and ourselves.	
Chris Hansen	
Chris Hansen is a Wisconsin native whose interest in honey bees dates back to childhood, watching his father and grandfather work bees on the family farm. Starting with his first two hives in 1998, Chris has since dabbled in just about everything the industry has to offer. Operating over 1,000 colonies and founding Hansen Honey Farm, he has also become nationally recognized as an expert in transporting honey bee packages. Founding Hansen Honey Trucking in 2012, Chris has spent over 14 years perfecting the craft of transporting package bees safely across the country, including designing his own trailers and building relationships with producers in California and beekeepers across the US. Chris is passionate about facilitating safe and healthy beekeeping practices, and delivering happy bees to his customers. He is a genuine instructor who loves to build relationships and provide guidance from his wealth of experience. He stays busy in Rhinelander WI with his wife, eight children, and an ever-revolving door of projects!	
Driving with a Buzz	3:20pm
Chris Hansen presents an engaging look into the science of transporting package bees, intertwined with the story of how he started his trucking company, tales from his time on the road, and glimpses into the package bee industry in northern California. Captivating stories provide an engaging backdrop to the practice of how your bees get from points A to B, and the hard work that goes into keeping them alive!	

Upper Peninsula Beekeeping Conference – March 28, 2026

Ana Heck	
Ana Heck is Michigan State University's Apiculture Extension Educator. Her role engages beekeepers, growers, pesticide applicators, and home gardeners to improve pollinator health. Ana holds a master's degree in public policy and a graduate minor in entomology from the University of Minnesota.	
Evaluating Honey Bee Brood Frames	Mixed Bag, 10:10am
Learn to distinguish between healthy and sick brood and to recognize signs of European Foulbrood, American Foulbrood, chalkbrood, and varroa parasitic mite brood syndrome.	
Getting Started with Beekeeping	Beginners' Track, 2:00pm
Learn how to help pollinators and what to consider before deciding if beekeeping is right for you. (This talk is for people considering beekeeping.)	

Andy Hemken	
Andy Hemken has been a beekeeper since 1995. Two hives turned into 50 hives, then 150 hives, while working as a full-time safety & ergonomics consultant. Now, he and his son, Scott, run 500 hives as Hemken Honey Co. in southeast Wisconsin.	
Andy has been making mead for over 25 years, winning numerous awards; speaking on mead making in Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa; and inspiring at least three people to take it up professionally. He is also a member of the Beer Baron's of Milwaukee, a home brew club.	
Andy, Cheryl & Scott Hemken participate in farmers' markets Southeast Wisconsin. Andy has been the President of the Milwaukee Waukesha Beekeeping Association for 17 years and has served as President of the Wisconsin Honey Producers. He has taught a variety of beekeeping classes and mentors local beekeepers. Andy is an occasional writer and contributor to the American Bee Journal, and a monthly writer for the Iowa Honey Producers newsletter.	
Mead Making	For Everyone, 11:30am
This is a simple story of mead-making, to educate people on the methods of producing mead, the oldest fermented beverage, and honeymoon drink.	

Rebecca Krans	
Rebecca Krans is an MSU Extension Consumer Horticulture Educator. She covers the Upper Peninsula and serves on the statewide Consumer Horticulture team. She coordinates the UP MSUE Master Gardener Program, a UP hotline/Ask Extension responder team, and works with MSUE Master Gardener Smart Gardening Volunteers to promote and provide Smart Gardening education across the UP. She received her B.S. Horticulture and master's degree from UW-Madison and worked in the horticultural industry for 10 years. During that experience, she realized the importance of teaching others about agriculture and where their food comes from, so she became a high school agriscience teacher/FFA advisor for 10 years. She has been working for Extension for the last 19 years. Personally, she owns a small farm with horses, Icelandic sheep, and chickens.	
Creating a Pollinator-Friendly Garden	For Everyone, 10:10am
This session will cover the use of native plants, herbs, and other techniques to draw pollinators to your garden or yard.	

Upper Peninsula Beekeeping Conference – March 28, 2026

Joel Lantz	
Joel Lantz is a Marquette, Michigan-based beekeeper, one of the founders of the Superior Beekeeping Club, and former Michigan Beekeeper’s Association’s UP representative. Although retired from the world of everyday work, he continues to follow his passion for education by spending his time raising, learning, and teaching all things bee. When not immersed in this 40-year pursuit, he spends time in the woods, makes rustic furniture, and chases his grandkids—the next generation of beekeepers.	
North Country Beekeeping	Beginners’ Track, 10:10am
An Upper Peninsula (Yooper’s) guide to cultivating bees in the harsh but spectacular UP of Michigan. Joel will share the observations and techniques that both he and his fellow beekeepers have developed to successfully navigate beekeeping amongst the bears and despite the cold. Something for everyone, so come with questions and (maybe) leave with some answers.	
Hive House	Mixed Bag, 11:30am
Did you ever wonder what it would be like to be inside of a bee hive-or at least close to it? Come join us to learn about the wonders of a Hive House. What is this stingless form of apitherapy, how does it work, and where does it come from? A look at the first and now one of only a few of its type in the United States.	

Dr. Meghan Milbrath	
Dr. Meghan Milbrath is an assistant professor in the Department of Entomology and in the Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Michigan State University, where she is a researcher and Extension Specialist. Her main focus is honey bee diseases, and she uses her training in Public Health to find solutions to disease and prevention. Meghan has a PhD in Environmental Health Sciences from the University of Michigan, a Masters of Public Health from Tulane University, and a Bachelors in Biology from St. Olaf College. She is also a beekeeper. She started keeping bees as a child in Northern Wisconsin and runs a honey farm and queen rearing operation in Jackson County Michigan.	
Dealing with Deadouts	For All Beekeepers, 10:10am
Deadouts are an unfortunate part of beekeeping. We will discuss how to clean up a deadout and how to make decisions on what to do with used equipment. We’ll cover a mix of science (what we know about disease risk) and management (how do we deal with disease risk in the real world).	
Drawn Comb is Gold!	Beginners’ Track, 11:30am
Drawn comb makes all beekeeping easier! In this session we will discuss the conditions for getting comb drawn, how to optimize drawing comb, and how to store and protect drawn comb.	

Upper Peninsula Beekeeping Conference – March 28, 2026

Dave Payant	
<p>Dave Payant has been keeping bees for 20 years. David and his wife Susan operate a small honey business called "Nodding Trillium Apiary". Some years, their bees have made over 100(!) gallons of pure gold. David has raised queen bees calling them "Superior Snow Queens". He has taught courses on raising queens using the Nicot method, Beekeeping 201 (Dare to Manage Your Bees), mite management, swarm catching and building woodenware. For several years, Susan and Dave were the "Bee Busters", catching swarms in the Marquette area. David currently has 29 hives in North Dickinson County behind a nasty electric bear fence. Susan keeps her hives in Marquette Township. They typically experience 85-90% hive survival and split (their hives!) every spring.</p>	
Make Your Own Woodenware	For All Beekeepers, 11:30am
<p>Dave has been making his own woodenware for years. In this very practical session, he'll demonstrate some of his methods and show how to put together everything you need for a basic hive.</p>	
Mite Treatment	For All Beekeepers, 2:00pm
<p>If you keep bees, Varroa mites are a fact of life. Mite control is essential to successful beekeeping. There are new and tried-and-true mite treatments; Dave will cover the methods that have worked for his colonies, as well as some basic Varroa biology.</p>	

Frank Wardynski	
<p>Frank grew up on a large cash crop and livestock farm in Momence, Illinois. He has a BS in Agriculture Science from Illinois State U. and an MS in Animal Science from MSU. He has worked for MSUE as a Livestock Agent in Ionia County, run a beef cattle farm in Ontonagon, and is currently an Extension Educator with MSUE, specializing in beef cattle management and farm business management.</p>	
Farm Financial Management – Making It Understandable <i>(or, "Take the Fear out of Farm Finance!")</i>	For Everyone, 2:00pm
<p>Farm financial management does not need to be as complicated and scary as too many farmers think. This session is designed to help farmers, both beginning and experienced, capture their financial information into a useful form, and to utilize MSU Extension Educators to complete annual year-end financial analysis.</p> <p>You do not need to be a beginning farmer to attend this session. This session is designed to help improve farmers' understanding of the farm finances regardless of how many years you have been farming. Specifically, we will cover the accounting practices, developing balance sheets and how to tie those together to conduct year-financial analysis.</p>	